

the routes to the Kilik and Mintaka diverge, there was a set of picturesque Wakhis from across the border waiting for me. They had left their yaks on this side of the pass, where they found better grazing. It was a pleasure to behold these sturdy fellows in their dresses of Yarkand fabrics showing all colours of the rainbow. Their clear-cut Iranian features, almost European in complexion, seemed to contrast pleasantly with their Kirghiz get-up. Down in the little wood of stunted birch-trees by the river where I camped for the night, it was scarcely as cold as might be expected at an elevation of nearly 12,000 feet. At 6 a.m. on the following morning the thermometer showed 47° F.

A march of four hours brought me on the 28th of June to the high grazing ground known as Shirin Maidan ("the Milky Plain"), close to the foot of the Kilik Pass. Here the change in the temperature due to the great elevation made itself most perceptible. When the sun passed behind light clouds at noon and a fresh breeze blew down the pass it was bitterly cold, and I was glad to get into my fur coat as soon as the baggage arrived.

The range immediately to the north which is crossed by the pass, appeared low by the side of the rugged peaks which show their snowy heads further down in the valley. More imposing than the watershed towards the Taghdumbash, looked a distant glacier-covered ridge visible through a side valley westwards. Behind it lay the sources of the Oxus, or more exactly of the Ab-i-Panja branch.

My Guhyal coolies and Hunza levies had now all been discharged, and I was left to enjoy the change in my camp surroundings. Muhammad Yusuf, the Sarikoli headman, and his seven relatives who brought the yaks that were to take my baggage onwards, were cheerful to look at and to talk to. They understood Turki quite well and were most communicative. In their midst I felt that I had passed out of India.